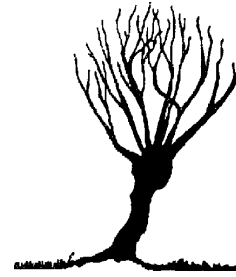


# The Friends of Epping Forest Newsletter



July 2001

**Dear Friend,**

## Epping Forest - A Special Place



We welcome the 7th Superintendent of Epping Forest, Mr Jeremy Wisenfeld, into his post and wish him many happy years of caring for the Forest and it's surrounding environment. The post is new to him but he is not new to the Forest for as Superintendent's Deputy and Conservation Officer he has played a prominent role in the Forest's Administration for the last four years. He previously worked for the National Trust in Devon and at Hatfield Forest in Essex.

'**Forest focus**' is the name of the first issue of a large glossy and colourful newsletter just produced by the Corporation. The first page emphasises the importance of the Forest as 'A Special Place' and we would like to quote from it in full:

*'Epping Forest's importance for wildlife has received international recognition with its inclusion on a list of*

*candidate sites for protection under tough European laws. The sites will make up a Europe-wide network representing the 'cream' of wildlife areas in EU member countries.*

### **A Long History of Conservation**

*The importance of Epping Forest for the conservation of wildlife has long been recognised. It all started with the 1878 Epping Forest Act that saved the Forest from destruction. This was a the first piece of UK conservation legislation making it a landmark in the history of wildlife conservation. Later, in the 20th Century, knowledge of the Forest's rich wildlife continued to grow. In the 1950's parts of the Forest were classified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and by 1990 more than two thirds of the Forest was given SSSI status with the enhanced protection of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.*

### **An International Dimension**

*Internationally the need to protect the world's biodiversity has become an urgent priority with hundreds of countries signing up to the Rio Convention on Biodiversity in 1992. Europe's response has been to protect a network of the most important sites, called Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Under the European Habitats Directive 1992 the protection for wildlife is strengthened. Local authorities must not grant planning permission that would damage the special features of these SACs and they are also given new powers to review old planning permissions that might cause harm. For the landowners there comes the responsibility to put a positive management plan in place to ensure that wildlife thrives.*

### **Beetles, Beeches & open space too...**

*Epping Forest is one of 229 candidate SACs in England. Internationally renowned for its population of ancient trees and their associated insects and fungi, the Forest's candidature is based on four specific features. These features are its extensive ancient beech woodland; its wet and dry heathlands interspersed amongst the trees and its populations of the Stag Beetle, the largest and best known beetle breeding in old trees and dead wood. The designation of the Forest as a candidate SAC is an*

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**Please send all letters to the Secretary and Editor:**  
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*Stag beetle and hand - photo John Yeoman*

*exceptional accolade for a site that is next to one of the largest capital cities on earth. The Corporation of London is pleased and proud of the Forests special status and it is a tribute to those who had the foresight to save this wonderful place. It is for all future generations to look after this unique inheritance.'*

Any reader wishing to receive a free copy of the Conservator's newsletter, 'Forest Focus' should write to, The Superintendent of Epping Forest, The Warren, Loughton, Essex, IG10 4RW, requesting a copy.

**Ed.**

## The Natural Aspect

When writing for the March Newsletter last February, I said I hope "we can enjoy the spring... with dry feet" What a vain hope! Not only were we subjected to more torrential rain and wind but also cold temperatures - delaying some aspects of spring by more than 2-3 weeks. The Blackthorn came out in mid April, instead of early March and the May blossom (Hawthorn) actually burst forth late in May instead of April. And then, the news came that there was Foot and Mouth disease at Brentwood and the Essex countryside was 'closed down' for access.

When I heard the news my first thought was - 'there are deer throughout the countryside between the Forest and Brentwood'. Deer, of course, being cloven-footed can be infected. By the way, did you see the silly local newspaper report about 'Disease Dangers' to the deer in the Deer Sanctuary at Theydon Bois? (the Sanctuary's 97 acres contain more than 100 deer). Having said, 'only two members of staff are allowed into the enclosure', the reporter went on, 'the carers are also giving foot baths to the animals in the sanctuary every day...! I wonder how the two members of staff caught them.

Back to reality. The Conservators closed the northern part of the Forest and the buffer lands immediately to give protection to the adjoining farms but continued to allow access by the public to the southern areas. There, most visitors would tend to come from urban districts, whilst the deer would mostly frequent the undisturbed northern part. In the circumstances this was a reasonable compromise.

Nationally there were only occasional media references to wildlife or deer - largely I suppose because there was

little that could be done about them, and, to attempt to do anything would make matters worse as animals would then scatter more widely. Fortunately no further disasters have happened in our area and the Forest and footpaths generally (except near livestock farms) are now open again.

However I wonder what effect two months of limited access has had. I imagine that it has been largely beneficial. A much-reduced amount of disturbance during most of the breeding season can only have had a good result. Reduced foot erosion during the extremely wet conditions will also have been useful.

The wet conditions will have had some good effects. In the countryside beyond the Forest this spring, local folk have said they do not remember ever seeing so many primroses and cowslips along the roadside verges.

Flooded ditches and ponds have perhaps assisted frogs, toads and newts and flooded meadows will have improved nesting opportunities for birds such as Lapwing, Snipe, and Redshank. Farmers however have not been able to get onto the fields.

However, whenever there are delays and changes, natural growth and development always quickly catch up. Many of the summer visitor birds arrived 'on time' in April - but then we had the cold, wet and windy spell. In the Forest the lack of Willow Warblers has been noticeable; their 'liquid' song, tumbling down the scale, is such an evocatively spring-like sound that used to be so common everywhere.

Dr Jes Dagley, the Forest Conservation Officer, tells me that Nightingale reports this year are very depressing. One bird was heard singing briefly in the Bury Wood but clearly did not stay. None have been heard around Connaught Water or the Red Path, their usual haunts. Two birds have been singing on the Copped Hall Estate and four at Fisher's Green however.

It seems that the Nightingale, like the Redstart, Wood Warbler and Red-backed Shrike are all summer visitors that were relatively frequent, if not common in the Forest half a century ago, and now are virtually extinct here as breeding birds. There seems to be no consistent reason to account for this situation. On the other hand this year seems to be a good year for Common and Lesser Whitethroats, also summer visitors. Swallow and House Martin numbers seem to be slightly better than last year.

Dr Dagley also reports comparatively good news from Chingford Plain where two Reed Buntings apparently like the rough grass conditions and two Skylarks have been singing - although this is less than last year. Skylarks prefer rather shorter grass areas and it is intended to provide this for next year by mowing some parts of the hillside. The Skylark is another species where drastically reduced numbers are giving cause for great concern

This spring the wet ground conditions have affected Forest management operations; many have been delayed and postponed and then as the bird nesting season began work became delayed still further. Clearance operations can usually start again in July.

As I write at the beginning of June, it is clear that tree and plant growth has been prolific because of the wet spring and although we do not (yet) have a 'flaming June' everywhere is exceptionally green. So let's not complain too much, but enjoy the summer whilst we can!

**Ken Hoy**

## Report from the Conservation

## Officer

Anyone passing **Theydon Green** recently will have seen the long grass and amongst it a great showing of Cuckoo Flowers (Lady's Smock). Whilst large parts of the Green will continue to be cut regularly throughout the spring and early summer by the Parish Council, these longer areas will now be left until July to set seed and allow the Orange Tip butterfly caterpillars to develop. The areas will then be cut and removed by the Corporation's Epping Forest grassland team.

This is another significant move in grassland conservation in the Forest and you can see more of this kind of patchwork mowing being undertaken, with various sizes of machine, throughout the remainder of the summer. Some areas will be cut, other nearby areas left long to allow insect life to survive. Over 20% of the Forest is made up of open grassland (over 500ha) and a lot of work goes into maintaining these important areas for conservation and recreation.

One splendid grassland to visit is Almshouse Plain where the careful mowing regime of the last few years has resulted in the return of Lousewort, a low-growing pretty pink flower that has flowered gloriously this year. Another plant brought back from the brink of extinction is Betony which is now flowering again in the grassy rides of The Lower Forest. More grassland restoration work is planned for late summer too, including at Baldwins Hill, Woodbury Hollow and Pole Hill where it is hoped to restore the once superb views and rescue rare flowers like the powder-blue Devil's-bit Scabious.

Less work is done in the wooded areas at this time of year because of breeding birds. However, Sycamores have been removed at High Beach recently and there will be lots of work going on with the hi-lift vehicle to make other trees safe alongside roads and footpaths. As the ground dries out some more work will be undertaken in The Lower Forest pollarding, creating new pollards and widening the rides. From August onwards there will be more work concentrating on opening up rides, such as The Green Ride in Bury Wood, to let in more light and encourage flowering shrubs to return and with them, we hope, the butterflies which are struggling to survive at the moment.

**Jeremy Daglej, Forest Conservation Officer**

## Epping Forest: reviewed and appreciated?

Remember the 'D' Ring-road, or Ring-way 3, or the M16? They are all embryonic names for the M25 and they stem from the files of the transport/road planners as far back as the late fifties. It was because a ring-road is planned to go around Tokyo that I recently had occasion to look up the M16 documents with which we were all so much involved in the seventies!

A Japanese TV crew wanted to know what I thought we had achieved by opposing the road proposals and what we have gained or lost from having the M25 running around north of the Forest!

The first public inquiry was 27 years ago - and to my surprise I was able to find many files, brown and faded at the edges. With hindsight I realised that the struggle we - the 'we' being 'us', with

Upshire Preservation Society and some dozen or so other local organisations - the struggle that 'we' undertook, had really been more effective than I remembered!

I did recall that the Inquiry Inspector had agreed to make a considerably important concession, namely to more than double the length of the Bell Common tunnel. Then I also remembered that he was persuaded to refuse to recommend the building of a planned east-facing junction on the M25 with what was then the A11 at Bell Common, Epping. It would have been just north of Ambresbury banks. Instead he had agreed that the big junction of the M25/M11 should become a full four-way junction. In the initial plans there was no connection for westbound traffic on the M25 to go south on to the M11. Traffic was to continue to Bell Common and then go south down the A11 (now B1393)

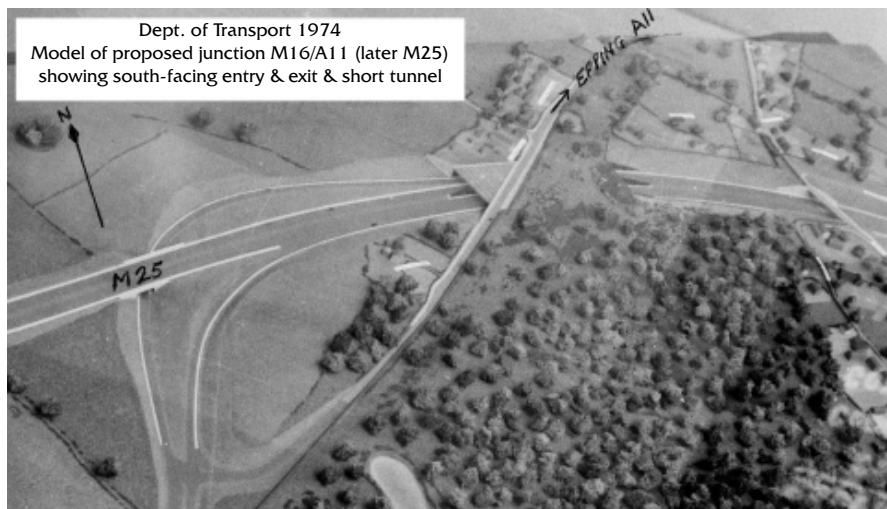
What struck me was the full impact of what that would have meant. It seems to be more terrible now than it did 27 years ago. All traffic coming off the M25 would go right through the middle of the Forest! That was probably the greatest gain that our opposition achieved.

Of course the Inspector also recommended - tho' it was not in his brief - that the Debden interchange also be made a four-way junction. Thereby reducing the traffic on the A121 crossing the forest at the Wake Arms roundabout. His recommendation was ignored.

Older members will recall that on the initiative of the Upshire Preservation Society we then went on to give evidence to Select Committees of both Houses of Parliament. Our case to one Committee was extremely ably lead by the late Raymond Cassidy.

What did that achieve? Well, the House of Commons Committee recommended that after the M25 no further roads should be built through the Forest. The House of Lords Committee said that was nonsense and they did not have to take any notice of what the 'other place' had said. But then the Lord's Committee was chaired by a noble Lord who had for eleven years been the Chairman of the Road Haulage Association!

However, further concessions included widening the bridge over the Motorway near Woodredon House (to encourage deer to cross) and constructing a tunnel at the Selvege (Copped Hall estate), both for deer and walkers. It was further agreed to plant up the embankments with indigenous (to the Forest) trees and only to use seeds of grasses and wild flowers likely to be found locally. At least it was something to ease the bitterness we all felt at the time.



Anyway, the Japanese TV director seemed to be pleased!

However I would like to add a little more. In searching and preparing for the Japanese, what also may be interesting is what I found when re-reading my 'Proof of Evidence' to the Inquiry where we were endeavouring to show the unique and priceless value of Epping Forest situated so close to a capital city. There were quotations covering three centuries of what others have said about the Forest - they are worth repeating now just in case we ever take the Forest 'for granted'.

In 'The Common Lands of England & Wales' (1963), Hoskins & Stamp referring to a 1793 Report of the Land Revenue Commission, state that:

*'...the Forest (in 1793) amounted to 9,000 acres of open land and was much frequented by Londoners from the East End for recreation, so much so that the Commissioners said that it was most important that nothing should be done to enclose it.'*

Earlier in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in his 'Tour through England and Wales' Daniel Defoe wrote:

*'This Epping Forest has been a wild forest since this island was first inhabited and may show us what the general face of the island was before the Romans landed in Britain.'*

Woolridge and Hutchings quoting Daniel Defoe in 'London's Countryside' (1957) go on to say:

*'This statement may be accepted as essentially accurate. There are indeed other heavily wooded tracts both in the Weald and the London Basin but in none perhaps is the probable character of the original widespread forest cover of our region more clearly and strongly recalled.'*

Today we know this **not** essentially accurate; Defoe was not really correct, but obviously he was impressed - and so were Woolridge & Hutching.

Dudley Stamp writing in 'Man & the Land (1955) says:

*"... the greatest of these gifts from the past is the New Forest, but by virtue of its situation Epping Forest, tiny fragment though it may be of its once greater self, is scarcely less valuable."*

Writing in 'The Romance of England's Forests' (1942) J Morewood Dowsett also draws attention to the historical importance of the Forest:

*'Epping Forest is London's forest... Londoners are now fully aware of its charms and make good use of the increased facilities given them by bus and tube to spend happy, healthy hours in the woods, although few are aware that their forefathers were in danger of losing this precious heritage for ever...'*

*But Epping Forest is also England's Forest in a way that no other Forest can be, for within its bounds, shrunk and diminished as they may be, we still have the history of England written in miniature.'*

Perhaps I should have also quoted John Clare who lived at High Beach in the 1830's and wandered in Hill Wood and walked the footpaths over the fields:

*I love the forest walks and beechen woods  
Where pleasant Stockdale showed me far away  
Wild Enfield Chase and pleasant Edmonton.  
While giant London, known to all the world,  
Was nothing but a guess among the trees,  
Though only half a day from where we stood.*

*Such is ambition! Only great at home  
And hardly known to quiet and repose.*

Or maybe from the 1970's the words of some children attending Suntrap Field Centre (before there were demands to quantify, test, score and evaluate).

A young 10 year old boy, Simon Ross from Leytonstone, wrote a simple little poem about the stream that runs near Suntrap.

*Sleekly as a snake that moves towards its prey,  
Sure as the sun that rises every day,  
It gurgles joyfully like a playful boy  
- as it flows towards the river Ching.*

And, on a autumn day, whilst sitting quietly under a tree in Hill Wood, a 9 year old girl from Walthamstow wrote:

*The sun is very bright - it sends rays of glittering light  
that make the red and yellow leaves sparkle.  
A squirrel runs across the ground and scampers up a tree.  
The only sound is the distant noise of the traffic, the  
twittering of the birds and the rustling of the leaves  
in the wind.  
No flowers - but you can smell things you can't smell  
in towns and cities!*

The 'Epping Forest experience'? - but it cannot be quantified!

**Ken Hoy**

## **M11 Corridor - Communication or Development**

There is value in our membership of the Council for the Protection of Rural Essex, of that I am convinced. It was through this body that we learned in May that the Government has decreed that a study of the London-Stansted-Cambridge Sub-regional Area should take place.

This takes in what is usually called the M11 Corridor which has, since its construction in the mid-70's, been regarded as a corridor of communication and there has been resistance to residential and commercial developments merely on the grounds that they would be sited near the M11. This hasn't always worked - the substantial development at Harlow, called Church Langley, is a case in point, but by and large it has.

However, for some time pressure has been mounting from various quarters, particularly the construction industry, to change the M11's designation to that of development rather than communication.

Essex County Council has been given the status of lead body in this study and accordingly they have commissioned Ecotech Consultants Ltd. of Birmingham to conduct it. Things seem to have moved quickly as a meeting was called in mid-May in which so-called stakeholders were able to participate.

A former Chairman of C.P.R. Essex, Mrs Ann Bartleet, was selected to represent the interests of all C.P.R.E. bodies along the corridor. C.P.R. Essex do not wish to see the M11 corridor's designation change. It has always been regarded as one of communication and a change in status to development is perceived as a slide into a situation that would be environmentally damaging to the whole area. It has been generally accepted that the preferred development option in Essex and East London is the Thames Gateway which also offers the opportunity of environment improvements to some of the Thameside communities.

The study comes at a time when a planning application is on the way for Stansted Airport's passenger carrying capacity to be increased to 20 million.

Any change in the M11's designation along the lines we fear, if accompanied by creeping development at Epping, North Weald, Harlow, Sawbridgeworth etc. could very easily lead to increased traffic and recreational pressures on Epping Forest. This would subvert the Conservators policies directed, in association with local authorities, at reducing traffic on Forest roads.

We have alerted the Conservators to these developments - although they may of course already have been aware of them - and hope that powerful resistance will ensue that will bring about a no change situation in relation to the status of the M11.

**Harry Bitten**

## How Well Do You Know the Forest 10

**Lord's Bushes:** is an isolated area of the Forest south of Buckhurst Hill - it consists of some 92 acres, over 37 hectares - only separated from Knighton Wood by the ancient trackway, Monkshams Lane. Lord's Bushes was once known as 'Lodge Bushes', named after what was a Royal hunting lodge, called 'King's Place', that existed, at least by 1378, just outside the northern edge of Lords Bushes. An old Georgian house, later called 'Langfords', that may have been built around the old lodge was found to contain - internally - massive ancient timbers when demolished about 1960. Lord's Bushes, once part of the 'waste' of the Manor of Chigwell was linked to it by 'Luxborough Lane' and another ancient track, 'Squirrel's Lane'. Although perhaps heavily exploited in the past by the commoners, as suggested by the name *Lodge Bushes*, it still contains many large old pollard trees. The very rare Wild Service tree can be found in Lord's Bushes. This tree usually spreads from suckers rather than seeds; thus it has a very local distribution and is considered to be a 'good indicator' of ancient woodland or hedgerows. A group of Wild Service trees are still growing where the old Squirrels Lane entered the eastern corner of Lords bushes. Lord's Bushes is another place where action was taken by local people to 'save' the Forest. "A resident removed the fence erected by the Lord of the Manor around Lord's Bushes at a spot where it crossed a well-known ancient bridleway. The Lord of the Manor (then) brought an action in which he was unsuccessful, to the great joy and enthusiasm of the neighbours" (Buxton 1885).

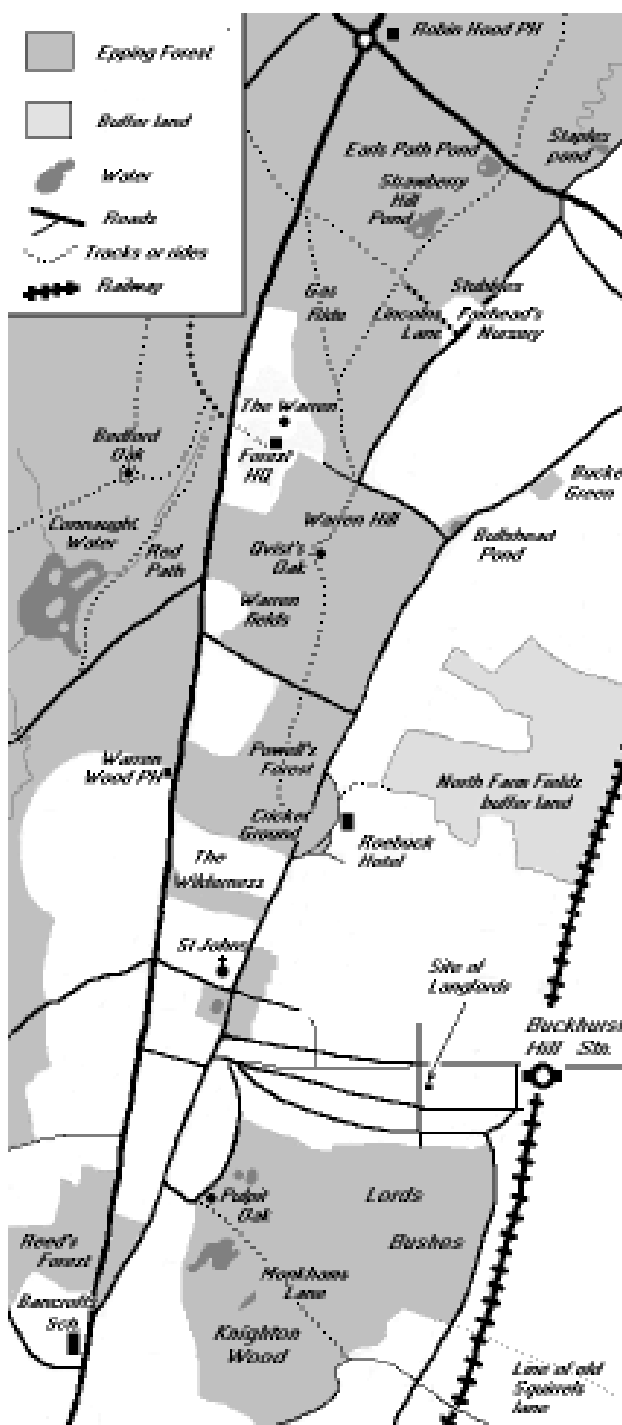
Today in the woodland the relics of some grassy 'plains' still exist. One, known locally for several generations as '**Jericho**', was cleared in the mid-1990's of invading tree and shrub growth. Most of the central area of the woodland was severely burnt in the fires of 1976. Since then dense regeneration has occurred. In the southwestern corner, at the top of Monkshams Lane is the ancient oak pollard known as the '**Pulpit Oak**'. It is locally assumed that lay preachers once used it, but there is no evidence to support this. As it is on the parish boundary at a corner of the Forest, it is also most likely to have been a boundary 'marker'. In the woodland a hollow old oak pollard was called 'The Poacher's Oak'.

**Knighton Wood:** This woodland was originally within the 'waste' of the parish of Woodford. In 1572 and again at later times there were violent protests when attempts were made to enclose it. However by the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it seems to have been enclosed and in private ownership. Edward North Buxton, the well-known Verderer,

bought Knighton Villa and its wood in 1862. It became his family home and the house was extended several times. He created the lake and planted many exotic trees, shrubs and bulbs, most notable being the daffodils, azaleas and rhododendrons. Edward North Buxton, with his brother, were very prominent members of the Commons Preservation Society that played such an important role in early support of Thomas Willingale's action against the Lord of the Manor of Loughton. After the Conservators took over the Forest it was on the initiative of the two Buxton brothers that several pieces of additional land were added to the Forest. The Forest acquired Knighton Wood and lake in 1930 after his death. Soon afterwards the house was demolished and the orchards and lawns, which extended down to the lake, were developed for housing.

An 'easy-access' path for wheel chairs has been created around the Lake.

**Powell's Forest :** This is the woodland and grassland



on Buckhurst Hill around the Cricket ground that stretches down to Manor Road. It was previously an old enclosure made by Nathaniel Powell, a local magistrate who lived at 'Luctons' in Loughton. It was one of several enclosures where fences were torn down by protesting local folk led by George Burney. It was the famous occasion on 16th January 1878 when, "George Burney....while the Government hesitated.... took three omnibus-loads of navies and in the course of one morning's work levelled the obnoxious fences round the enclosures which the Commissioners (appointed by Parliament) wished to legalise". (1882 Guide-book) On that day other fences were broken down around enclosures in Wanstead, Buckhurst Hill, Loughton and near the Robin Hood PH. Although the police took names they did not intervene and the matter was not taken any further. This event occurred at a crucial time whilst the law was unclear. It is thought to have had a considerable effect upon public opinion and the passing, a few months later, of the Epping Forest Act. Chairman of the Epping Forest Preservation Society, George Burney was also prominent in The Commons Preservation Society and he was several times involved in legal actions that incurred financial loss. His role was later recognised by the Corporation of London and he was compensated. Whilst this woodland was enclosed some planting of trees did occur - however it still contains old hornbeam and oak pollards from the ancient forest.

**Bucket Hill** -In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century this was the old name for Buckhurst Hill (the hill). Then an old road from Epping, used by Samuel Pepys in 1659, had crossed the forest waste from the 'Kings Head' at High Beach to 'Bucket Hill'. This road came across Fairmead Bottom, past the 'Reindeer' inn (now The Warren), over Warren Hill and on up to '**The Roe Buck**' Inn. This road, on an early 17<sup>th</sup> Century map, is called the "London way from Epping" although Pepys refers to it as the only "path" where "the way was good".... "as if we rode through a kennel all the way". Possibly 'a kennel' implies the way was closed in overhead by the tree canopy. Perhaps this 'path' was a track used only by horsemen and foot travellers and carts and carriages went along the road through Loughton. **Roebuck Green** is the name used to refer to the green in front of the Roebuck Hotel that was isolated from the Forest when the road up the hill was straightened in the 1780's. **Bucket Green** was the name of the small isolated piece of grassland nearly opposite the bottom of Albion Hill. The roadside pond near the corner of Warren Hill road was called the '**Bull's Head**' pond after the nearby 'Bull's Head' Inn. Like some other Forest ponds it was used to water the horses and swell wooden wheels to tighten the spokes and the iron 'tyres' of the carts etc. There were railings in the pond to guide wagons and carriages through the pond. **St. John's Green** with its Horse Chestnut trees, and **St. John's Pond** are both named after St John's Church. Nearby is **The Wilderness**. The name is now used for the relic of woodland, just north of St. John's church, that is between The High Road, Buckhurst Hill and the Epping New Road. The name derives from the house and garden of the well-known artist and pacifist Walter Spradbery. The Forest was a favourite subject of many of his paintings that are on view in the District. Walter Spradbery bequeathed his garden to the adjoining Forest and traces of the garden can still be seen.

All these small isolated pieces of land are part of Epping Forest.

**Warren Hill:** This name is confusingly used for, a road, a house and two geographical locations. Warren Hill, the

high land north of the 'hill' of Buckhurst Hill is perhaps the 'correct' use of the name. Warren hilltop was clear of trees and in 1543 was in the centre of Henry VIII's great Deer-park which stretched from Hill Wood and Fairmead Bottom to the 'Roe Buck' Inn (Hotel). Although much of the Hill had by 1877 been enclosed, it was returned to the Forest after the passing of the Act. The heather growing on the hilltop is conserved and is now spreading again. Of the various enclosures that have eaten into the Forest around the hill one of the oldest is '**The Warren**', recently the Superintendent's house. This is thought to have been an old 'Forest Lodge' and is probably the oldest of the three lodges associated with Henry VIII's Deer-park. On the 1773 map it is still called 'High Standing' although during the 18<sup>th</sup> century the house was the 'Reindeer' Inn with an extensive rabbit warren around it - no doubt why the Inn was famous for its rabbit pie. Around 1800 it became the private residence of General Grosvenor, a close friend of the Duke of Wellington. In the field to the north of 'The Warren' is an 'obelisk', that is thought to have come from demolished Wanstead House. It is said to have been erected by the General in memory of the horse that carried him through the Battle of Waterloo. Crossing the Forest to the east of the 'obelisk field' is a ride that has been called the **Gas Ride** because it follows the line of a 'North Sea' gas pipe-line. Just south of 'The Warren' a small area of woodland on Warren Hill was enclosed to allow it to regenerate naturally to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It was called **Coronation Plantation**.

Recently an exception, in naming trees, was made of an ancient pollard oak on the top of Warren Hill by naming it after the late - Alfred Qvist, Forest Superintendent (1949-1978). It is now known as **Qvist's Oak**.

The adjoining fields - Warren fields - originally enclosures, to the south and west, that recently belonged to the house on the corner of Manor Road called 'Warren Hill', now called 'Warren Hall', were acquired by the Conservators in the 1980's and restored to the Forest. The name 'Warren Hill' (also 'Toboggan Hill') has also been confusingly used to describe the grassland, that slopes down to the Ching Brook from what is the 'Warren Wood' PH, on the Epping Road. The 'Pub' was built in 1854 and was a favourite 'stopping' spot for the haywains returning to the countryside up the Epping Road. No doubt seeds falling from these wagons account for some of the flora along the Epping New Road.

**North Farm:** the Conservators acquired the old pasture fields of North Farm, some 57 acres (23 hectares), in 1990. Planting and restoration of hedgerows has been undertaken. It is thought that the field boundaries may date from Tudor times.

The fields are Buffer land over which there is 'permissive' access to 40 acres (16 hectares) for walkers. Cattle graze the fields in summer and autumn. "The purpose of buffer land is to safeguard the rural environment of the Forest and thereby its natural aspect or feel and to provide the Forest wildlife, support and complementary wildlife habitats, thus facilitating the protection of the Forest's flora and fauna" (Conservators).

**Paul's Nursery:** It was once on the area of woodland that is behind the 'Keepers' cottages' south of the Kings Oak PH at High Beach (not on the map). Although originally an enclosure from the Forest, the Commission that sat in arbitration on all such matters in the 1870's allowed the 15 acres of the then famous plant nursery to remain outside the Forest and to continue as a nursery. It was acquired and returned to the Forest in 1920.

Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Maples (Acer) and other exotics from the nursery can still be found there.

**Fairhead's Nursery:** Situated along the west side of Nursery Road, Loughton, this old enclosure was also a nursery owned by the Paul brothers as it is also called 'Pauls Nursery' on the 1882 Arbitration map. It too was allowed to remain outside the Forest - but subject to certain public access. A small part of the original area is still a privately owned nursery today. Some of the hedgerows of the original enclosure can still be seen in the Forest near Strawberry Hill.

**The Stubbles & Lincoln's Lane:** These names are north and south respectively, of Fairheads nursery. 'The Stubbles', an old enclosure once ploughed, adjoins the northern hedge of the old nursery and 'ridge and furrow' lines can still be seen. Lincoln's Lane is an old access lane into the Forest between two enclosures - one of which is the Nursery. To the south, was a field, called 'The Conservator's Pound', where unmarked cattle or horses were impounded. It is now part of the Forest.

*Ken Hoy*

*This is the last of the series 'How Well Do You Know the Forest'. In the near future we hope to produce all sections as a booklet.*

## **'The' Epping Forest Artist? Walter Spradbery 1889-1969**

Interesting as the search for the missing Epstein paintings of Epping Forest is, we should not overlook the work of a fine local artist who also loved and painted Epping Forest; Walter Spradbery.

Born in Dulwich he eventually made his home in the Epping Forest area and after marrying Dorothy D'Orsay in 1929, he and his wife moved to the 'Wilderness' Buckhurst Hill. There they staged small scale operas and Shakespeare in their large garden. Upon Walter's death, his wife having died before him, the building was demolished and the land returned to Epping Forest. A small plate set in the ground commemorates the site today.

His most widely known works are the posters he produced from 1911 to 1944 for what was originally the London Underground Electric Railway Company and later the London Passenger Transport Board. Collections of these fine examples of poster art can be found for example in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London Transport Museum and the William Morris Gallery. The last poster to be produced was in 1944, during the War, "A New View of St Paul's Cathedral from Bread Street". This was so popular that it was, in spite of wartime problems, reprinted by the then Ministry of Information and distributed worldwide.

It was, however as a watercolour artist that Walter excelled and several of his Epping Forest paintings can be found in the area. One fine example is in the library of Wansfell College. However he did produce some oil paintings but you would now have to go to Milton Keynes(!) to see a large oil painting of Epping Forest that was exhibited in the Royal Academy in the 1930's. Until recently this painting was on display for a long time in the Roebuck Hotel. Walter produced some outstanding work in a far more humble medium; lino-cuts, some of which were enlarged to produce posters.

There are other aspects of the man apart from his artistic work. A lifelong pacifist he was awarded a D.C.M. during the first World War for leading a party of stretcher

bearers and badly wounded men to safety under heavy fire near Mametz during the Battle of the Somme on August 26<sup>th</sup> 1918. All through his life he took an active part in various peace movements and at a comparatively old age still took part in the Aldermarston Marches.

Epstein's paintings were secondary to his work as a sculptor and he seems to have taken very little interest in the life of the locality. Walter however was very much involved, a founder member of Buckhurst Hill Community Association, a teacher at Walthamstow Adult Education Centre, and as an admirer of William Morris, a trustee of the William Morris Gallery. A modest man whose posters are ranked alongside those of E McKnight Kauffer, Graham Sutherland, and another Essex artist, Edward Bawden. So by all means let the search for the missing Epsteins continue, but we should not forget a fine local artist, the whereabouts of the majority of whose works we know!

*(The large Epping Forest painting is now in the Head Office of Corus and Regal Hotels, Blakelands House, Milton Keynes, Bucks.)*

*John Howes*

## **City of London Cemetery Walk 24th. May 2001**

Twenty two of us turned up to find out what he had to say about a cemetery. Trees, geology, and history had been promised, and as a bonus we got a fine warm day with sunshine. Not only that, he managed to complete the course in just over the allotted two hours despite many of us lingering over the many interesting monuments, trees flowers and bushes we saw along the way.

The first stop after entering through the impressive stone archway over the gate was a memorial to William Haywood, City Engineer and Surveyor from 1846 to 1894. It was he who had the job of finding a suitable site for the cemetery at the time the City burial grounds were becoming full, and when development of new buildings and roads (e.g. Holborn Viaduct) meant that many human remains (more than 12,000) would need to be removed to new places. In the event he chose the 200 acres (8 IRa) at Little Ilford, (now Manor Park), which was purchased in 1853 by the City Corporation. Ownership of this land made them commoners of Epping Forest, which, as you know led to the Epping Forest Act of 1878.

Why, we asked, did he choose this site? Don't know he said (our leader that is, not William), but it may have been that the geology was right for a cemetery. The Dept. of the Environment Guidance on cemeteries, suggests that the soil must be suitable in that it need be finely divided such that air and moisture may pass freely, as this assists decay.

The soil must also be easily worked, and yet remain stable when the graves are dug, to which end a low water table is an advantage. Most of the cemetery is indeed on such soil, the Taplow Gravel, one of the terrace gravels deposited by the River Thames over the last two million years or so.

Then we walked a few yards to another monument, this time a private memorial to Capt. Vigilant erected in 1952. It is carved from one block of Carrara marble, possibly the largest single block ever to be taken from Italy, and depicts Christ being taken down from the cross. The wonder of the workmanship of this statue, which cannot be much less than life size, is that there are some eight figures, all of which appear to be in the round.

Then, at last, he started to talk about trees, after directing us to the Victorian loo close to the first tree of note. This was an **Oriental plane**, very similar to a London Plane, being one of its parents, the other being the occidental plane from America. Close by was a **Deodar**, a **Caucasian Wingnut** and a **Copper beech**.

We walked on, following our leader, who at this stage was as lost as we were, but with the aid of a map he was soon on the right road, Memorial Avenue. This road, common with many others in the cemetery is lined with substantial trees, mainly **Lime**, and **London Plane** but also with **Horse chestnut** (both red and white varieties) **Lombardy poplar**, and a number of other species. Indeed there are hundreds of trees throughout, around and among the 10,000 or so memorials. As we strolled along, we and he discussed the history of some of these species, but the next stop was at the memorial to those killed in the City and adjacent boroughs during the wartime bombing. Flanking this memorial are weeping forms of **Holly** and of **Silver birch** and in the lawn and to either side are two very nice **Brewer's weeping spruce** with foliage hanging from the branches like veils.

Walking on we passed an **Indian horse chestnut**, skirted the entrance to the service area, which contrasts strongly with the Gardens of Rest, where we paused just to look at the vista of lawns roses and trees. A **weeping copper beech** no more than 4ft high was intriguing, and we were shown that the leaves within this small tree were green, the copper colour being restricted to those exposed to the sun.

Nearby is a small attractive pond, with some sizeable fish, and at least four terrapins. After a pause whilst we all gazed into the water, a stroll across a lawn brought us to another deodar, a **Tulip tree**, and a **Blue cedar**. Passing a row of **Cheal's weeping cherry** we then came to a tree called **Pride of India**, (which actually comes from China), and to which, he suggested, we look at again in the autumn when it should have seeds, which hang from the branches like small lanterns. In this area were also a **Vineleaf maple** (a bit rare), a small yellow leafed form of **Robinia** and a **Scarlet maple**.

He then pointed out a Hornbeam, pollarded and old, which must have existed before the cemetery was enclosed, a typical tree of Epping Forest. Passing **Snowy mespil** and **Mountain ash** we reached another group of trees which included a number of different species of the **Maple** family, to reach the boundary of the cemetery bordered by the Liverpool Street to Southend Railway. We then wondered whether this had influenced Hayward in his choice of site, with this convenient transport to and from the City.

At this southeastern end of the cemetery there are a number of tall trees which must be as old as the cemetery itself. Standing in meadow like grassland they included **Horse chestnut**, **Corsican pine**, and surprisingly two handsome **Elms**. Also a **Fern-leaf beech** and **Turkey oak**.

From hereon we strolled gently back towards the entrance, stopping to look at some of the memorials recording the thousands of human remains removed from City churchyards to this cemetery

But we did also stop to look at a few more trees, one, a **Tree of Heaven**, (though there is some doubt as to its identification) and a **Hybrid cockspur thorn** grafted onto hawthorn rootstock, a variety now becoming a common street tree.

What was the best tree? Was it the old hornbeam, possibly the oldest tree in the cemetery; or was it one of the rare maples; a stately London plane; or the large but delicate fern leaf beech. We must return, have another look at what we have already seen in a different season, look at what we missed this time, and just enjoy the wildlife of the City of London Cemetery.

Our thanks to the Corporation of the City of London for allowing people to visit this cemetery, and to Mr. David McCarthy for making us welcome.

**Your ACE Reporter.**

#### NOTES

*Published information records that within the Cemetery are: 168 species of wild flowers; 138 species of identified fungi; 55 species of birds, 32 of which breed; 18 species of butterflies; 8 species of mammals; and grass snakes, frogs, toads, terrapins, and at least 70 species of trees. It takes 15 working days for the grass cutting team to complete one lap of the cemetery.*

*Acknowledgement and thanks are given to 'Haywood' the Cemetery and Crematorium Newsletter for facts and information in this article.*

*Copies of the Cemetery Tree Trail are available at the Gatehouse, priced at £2.00.*

### Letter from Mary Taylor

Member's letters, March 2001, brought back childhood memories of trips to Epping Forest in the 1930's. My two sisters and I were lucky enough to have a car-driving mother and we made fairly frequent afternoon visits from our home in Wanstead to our favourite spots in the forest.

The brown-coloured box-shaped 12 horse-power car, exciting to think of twelve horses pulling us along, was a Morris Cowley with a thermometer gauge to give notice of the water overheating on the bonnet in place of the mascot. Firstly we had to call at Randall's Garage for petrol. The attendant asked the required number of gallons, @ 1ld per gallon, and this was pumped by hand into a glass cylinder on top of the petrol pump before being disgorged down the hose-pipe into the car. Whilst this was taking place the attendant asked if Madam would like the windscreen and all other windows wiped, the radiator topped up, and the tyres checked. Payment plus a tip was made directly from the car and off we went.

Mother, three daughters and the dog, set off via Woodford High Road along the almost new Epping New Road, turned off at Long Bottom to take the prettier route up to the green painted tea hut (this was not regarded as a suitable place for refreshment as the china crockery was washed up in a bucket of brown water at the side of the hut) on to High Beech.

High Beech was the most popular destination except at the weekends and Bank Holidays when there were too many people and a great deal of litter. It was a wonderful open space covered with rabbit holes and the larger sandy fox burrows which caused tremendous excitement for the young dog Mickey although the animals stayed securely underground. The excitement for us was the seemingly resident Wall's Ice cream man with his "Stop Me and Buy One" tricycle. A snow-fruit in a three-cornered cardboard case was one penny, an ice cream brick was two pence, a tub four pence and a packet of wafers a halfpenny. An ice cream was a real treat.

After the High Beech stop we usually continued on through the forest to where there was a favourite climbing



tree. It was possible to stop anywhere and everywhere there were no restrictions. We used to pull down the lower branches of some of the trees for the dog to hold onto with his teeth and there was nothing he liked better than to sail up and down at a considerable height. If allowed he would do this all the afternoon.

In the spring we took our tiddler nets to collect frog-spawn from the ponds. In summer we made daisy-chains, held buttercups under chins to see if we liked butter and of course everybody picked bunches of wild flowers. Later in the year it was fun to tread on puffballs and to stick burrs and gooch grass on the backs of the unsuspecting. No visit to the forest was complete without a game of hide-and-seek.

There were three special annual outings. One was to drive to Fyfield, near the Gypsie Mead Tea Rooms, where there was a large meadow of primroses. Conservation had not been thought of in those days and we picked large bunches of the flowers to take home and provided they survived the journey to fill every vase in the house. Secondly, we went to pick bluebells, stopping at hedgerows and waysides. We often passed cyclists, many on tandems, who had huge bunches of bluebells, their stems almost touching the ground, tied to their rear carriers. My Mother condemned these people because by picking such long stems they were robbing the plant of next year's blooms. The fact that we had a car full was all right, we knew how to pick them properly, and could come back and do exactly the same thing next year.

The third annual outing was to take my Grandmother to gather bracken, as it was turning to autumn shades, for her vases. My Grandmother lived in a large Victorian house and before the bracken could be used it had to be dried and pressed by placing it, for many weeks, under the mats which were strewn about on top of the 'drawing room carpet. I don't remember any of us suffering ill effects from what is now described as a most poisonous plant, and the bracken stayed in the vases until the following autumn.

With my Grandmother on board we always took the route past High Beech Church, which she thought was so beautiful and peaceful that she would like to be buried in the churchyard. Grandmother was not expected to climb the trees, but did enjoy watching the dog demonstrate his skills, and we used to drive to the Wake Arms and then take the longer route, with the trees forming leafy arches above our heads and a good chance of seeing deer in the clearings, through to Theydon Bois and on to the picturesque bridge at Abridge.

With the end of the 1930's and the world war came the beginning of great changes to the forest. Motor vehicles, road building, increased population and development of all kinds

brought an end to the old way of life. Maybe we were the unintentional vandals of the day but we really loved the forest, and thanks to Forest management, better education, and the fierce protection of the land, it is still there offering enjoyment and a great deal of freedom to my Grandchildren, and to every one of us, for many years to come.

## 'Epping Hunt & Gypsies'

A small faded newspaper clipping fell out of a book the other day. I do not remember where it came from originally but the typeface is small and poorly printed - suggesting that it is 19<sup>th</sup> century and possibly contemporary with the contents, that is 1874.

*"...duller travestie was never witnessed. A rival Easter Hunt was provided by a neighbouring publican, but was a still more ludicrous failure. The "hunt" was on Easter Monday, 1874, was even worse than that of 1873.*

*The real Epping Hunt is a thing of the past, and it is time the parody was suppressed.*

*Another noteworthy feature in Epping Forest should not pass unnoticed — the Gipseys. There are far fewer than there used to be, but you may still see their tents about Wanstead Flats, or wherever they are permitted to pitch them; and the women and children are sure to muster strongly at all holiday gatherings."*

The clipping then quotes from: Borrow's, *Romano Lavo-lil*, p. 324

*"Epping Forest... the loveliest forest in the world! Not equal to what it was but still the loveliest forest*



*Fair to the world and the pleasantest especially in the summer ; for then it is thronged with grand*

company, and nightingales, and cuckoos, and Romany 'chals' and 'chics' (gipsy lads and lasses). As for Romany-chals there is not such a place for them in the whole world as the Forest. Them that wants to see Romany-chals should go to the Forest especially the Bald-faced Hind on the hill above Fairlop, on the day of Fairlop Fair. It is their trysting-place, as you would say, and there they muster from all parts of England, and there they whoops, dances and plays."

Borrow's reference to the 'Bald-faced Hind' obviously was when the 'Bald Hind', Chigwell overlooked the old extensive Hainault Forest before 1850.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gypsies were seen as a problem on the Forest where they had in the past no doubt camped unhindered. The evangelist preacher 'Gypsy Smith' was born in a caravan parked on the Walthamstow parish 'waste' or common as the Forest was considered in 1860. The spot marked by the memorial granite block is just off the line of the old Woodford wagon road that passed through the Forest until the Woodford New Road (A104) was built in 1829

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Forest Keeper Butt (A Keeper's Tale, Fred Speakman) recalls being instructed to remove the gypsies from Forest land. They were 'turned off' because their horses were 'unmarked' or unlicensed and they were threatened with having them impounded. He also recalls being sent to Hainault Forest with other keepers, police and 'men from the Buxton brewery' to turn off the gypsies at the time when Verderer Edward North Buxton was hoping to persuade the City of London to buy the existing Hainault Forest. Instead it was purchased for £10,000 by the London County Council.

**Ken Hoy**

## 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Centenary Walk:

Forget about last year when the rain Gods frowned upon us for the first time (give or take!) This year we'll return to fine weather! So, on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September everyone is invited to join The Friends and the Ramblers on our annual walk through Epping Forest from South to north based on the Centenary walk established in 1978 to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of the Epping Forest Act 1878.

It was that legislation, promoted by the Corporation of the City of London that restored lost lands to the Forest (it had dwindled to less than half its present size) and secured its future as a public open space.

The Walk starts at the junction of Capel Road and Forest Drive near Manor Park Station at 09.00 hrs sharp. Thereafter the approximate timing will be:

Green Man roundabout, Leytonstone (meet centre of roundabout) 10.00 hrs.

County Hotel, Oak Hill, Woodford 11.00 hrs.

Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge/Butler's Retreat, Chingford 12.00 noon

The Owl, PH, Lippitt's Hill. Lunch stop from 13.30 - 14.15.

After lunch the walk will continue across Fairmead Bottom and Hill Wood to High Beach. Thereafter we will take in Honey Lane Quarters, the Conservator's 'buffer' land at Woodredon, St Thomas's Quarters and further 'buffer' land at Copped Hall before arriving at Bell Common, Epping, about 17.30 hrs.

We hope that local M.Ps and officers of the Forest will participate in the event as will representatives of the Council for the Protection of Rural Essex, the R.S.P.B., Essex Wildlife Trust and the British Naturalists Association.

The walk is around 14 miles long and is OPEN TO ALL. There will be ample stops and pauses when short talks will be given on the Forest and its management and history in furtherance of the Walk's objective to promote the appreciation and knowledge of this priceless open public space.

The Walk can be joined - and left - anywhere along the way. Any queries ring me on 020 8529 8594

**Harry Bitten**

## FofEF E-mail and Web addresses

Ken Hoy [khoy@care4free.net](mailto:khoy@care4free.net)

Membership Secretary (Seymour Moss)

[seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk)

FofEF web-site - <http://members.aol.com/friendsef/foef.htm>

## Grid References

We usually provide a Grid Reference, in the 'Dates of your Diary' list of Walks, like this example: **GR 397 948**. Just in case there are some folk who are unsure how to use the six figure reference number - here's how. (you need a map of the central part of the forest)

All maps based on the national Ordnance Survey (**O.S.maps**) usually have grid lines that are north/south and east/west. These lines provide blocks on the map that are one kilometre square. At the edge of the map each line has a two figure number. In the above example the **3 & 9** are referring to north/south line **39** at the top or bottom of the map covering the Forest. The fourth and fifth numbers, **9 & 4** refer to line **94** on the left or right side of the map. (the reference number always starts at the top or bottom, not the sides - Rambler Frank Holzman has helped Peg to remember by the following: "go along the passage before you go up the stairs").

The square that co-ordinates from line **39** and the next line **40** with line **94** and line **95** can now be identified. It is one kilometre square. **397** can be considered as **39.7** and you must estimate **.7** from **39** to **40**. Do the same between **94** and **95** - estimate **94.8** - and you should now know at which pub we were to rendezvous. (Answer at bottom of page).

*Note:* On the National Grid every square section of 10 km squares is given a two letter designation - in our example it would be **TQ 397 948**, but when giving a local reference the letters are often left out.

*Grid Reference Answer: Royal Forest Hotel*

## Chairman's Annual Report, April 2001

In my Report this time last year I made some points about our need to recruit new members - asking everyone to recruit a friend. I thought the result was such that we do not appear to have increased our membership by many, for in 1983 it was 1338. A month or two ago we had 1327 'memberships' - but I now understand there were a considerable number of renewals 'in-the-pipeline' and it is about 1350. Not impressive - so we need to think. When folk come up to our stall at fetes and fairs - where we might consider we ought to recruit some members ...if they know little about us, they may well ask, "What or who are you? "

I suppose we could say we are some 1300 members - but that's not quite right. There are husbands and wives, families and probably it is more accurate to say we are about 1800 individuals. 1800 individuals that do what? In simple terms, 1800 individuals who care enough, and know enough to feel the need to join together to help protect or care for Epping Forest.

And we, the Committee, try to represent that wide range of individuals who are our membership, collectively as an organised voice in defence of what we see as the interests of the Forest and the people who use it. In short then, I suppose we are a 'pressure group' of Forest users

We boldly say 'in the interests of the Forest' - *as we see them of course...* 'we' as I said, being your Committee. We try to keep the membership informed of what we are doing in their name; hence we have the Newsletter.

That is our main means of communicating with the 1800 individuals and tonight at this AGM we are reporting to those of you who are able and interested enough to come along. This report will go into the July Newsletter for all the membership to read and be informed - but of course, at that stage it cannot be questioned or challenged.

So this year, I would like to place some emphasis on the value of the Newsletter.

It is often said "there is too much in it!", "it's too big" "I cannot read it all in one go". (*protests at this point from the audience*) However we would like to know if this is really true!

Peg, the Editor, and Ron Clayton, who does a great job of arranging the material for printing, frequently have to discard items or squeeze them together in order stay within 14 pages - as this is the weight limit of the postage.

Some statistics might help us appreciate the size of the task of producing the Newsletter three times a year. 1351 are currently distributed (that is household addresses), over 300 of these are posted at a cost of more than £60, but what is impressive, is that over £200 is saved on every issue, by the door to door distribution of over a 1000 copies.

This obviously is quite an operation - organised in the past by Judy Miller, but now by 'Jim' Gimson. After collation of the pages, Seymour Moss prints addresses on 1350 envelopes. Then envelope stuffing by four other members begins and the 300 odd postal copies are deposited of. Next Jim, helped by some half a dozen people, distributes batches of Newsletters to other distributors. In all there are 51 door to door distributors who, as I said, save us £600 a year. Knowing all that I am sure you will wish me to thank that team of people who do such a great job by producing and distributing our Newsletter.

But what else do we DO? Well you all know we have regular monthly walks, there is Harry's big Centenary Walk, occasional lectures or talks when there is an important issue to be discussed and in November the enjoyable 'Forest Supper'. But this is all internal involvement.

However, there is a vital 'other side' to what we do, the external

side of our activities.

I said we are a 'pressure group' concerned with the Forest, and obviously it is most important that we keep ourselves informed - our ear to the forest floor as it were.

So there are contacts that we must maintain, people with whom we must liaise, committees and meetings at which we try to put the point of view of the membership who use and value the Forest - and this goes on every year, but is boring to put into the Annual Report over and over again.

It is difficult to believe that we have been involved in this way for so long - actually 32 years since the very beginning - but that was many letters, many meetings, many reports and many Public Inquiries ago.

During the last year one of the main emphasises of our activities has perhaps been concerned with planning matters. Our thanks must go to Irene Buchan who keeps an eagle eye on all planning applications that might be detrimental to the Forest. She is especially watchful about the question of excessive lighting in the neighbourhood of the Forest. As an 'aside' here may I say that Irene would very much like some help with this question of checking planning applications - volunteers please contact Peg.

Also, at this point may I remind you that for many years Joy Smith has faithfully recorded our Committee Minutes - she would like a rest. Anyone interested in helping also please contact Peg (020 8529 8594)

Returning to Planning matters. There has been a constant threat of development leading to further urbanisation of the surrounds of the Forest - especially in the High Beach area and you will know that this is an issue with which we have been concerned for many years.

Just over a year ago the then Superintendent of the Forest, Mr John Besent, because he also was very concerned, made a detailed Report to the Conservators on this whole question of the urbanisation of the areas surrounding the Forest. Shortly afterwards he gave a very well attended public lecture to us in this building.

Following this, during the last year the question of traffic on the Forest roads has been discussed at meetings with officers of the District and County Councils.

We have been kept informed of these meetings and we have felt able to strongly support the Superintendent in the matter.

Currently, perhaps a major threat to the roads through the Forest comes from the development of the giant Sainsbury's distribution centre along the new road south of Waltham Abbey.

I remember reporting this to you last year. We subsequently submitted objections to this proposal which, if I may remind you, will mean the closure of other Sainsbury's centres and a concentration at Waltham Abbey. The new depot, which incidentally will be a third of a mile long and some 60 feet high, will involve 3,000 vehicle movements every 24 hours and of these 900 will be H.G.V.'s. The intention is to cover east London, south Essex and all Kent via the M25.

Last autumn at a meeting of the District Planning Committee to consider Sainsbury's planning application, Councillors Mrs Dorothy Paddon and Mrs Jenny Smith spoke against the proposal. Only one public objector was allowed to speak, that was Mr Terry Callaghan, Chairman of the Epping Forest Branch of the CPRE, but Councillor Mrs Smith was able read to the meeting a statement of our objections.

However the planning application (it appeared almost eagerly) was then approved by the Planning Committee. Apparently the intrusion of the giant building in the landscape was of no concern to most of the members and neither were the enormous local

traffic implications.

Assurances were given that Sainsbury's have promised to ensure that their vehicles use only the M25 and avoid local roads through the Forest. However there was a proviso! - 'unless the motorway is blocked'. It has since emerged that the criteria for deciding when the M25 is 'blocked' was defined as when the speed of the traffic falls below 15 mph!

We have since written to Sainsburys following the matter being vigorously raised with Sainsburys by Mr Callaghan who pointed out the traffic problems they are likely to encounter by this concentration of their vehicles. However they have replied saying they were 'satisfied with the advice they have been given'.

I believe this will mean we are likely to have a future struggle to prevent the A121 (Woodredon Hill) being 'improved' and extensively widened. That would bring us back to the 1950's when there was a threat of the M16 (later M25) being built to pass through the Forest at the Wake Arms. That was the original motorway proposal!

On a lighter note I was reminded of a past serious threat when at the end of last year I was approached by Japanese Television and asked what we considered we had gained (or lost) as a result of opposing the M25 motorway. Apparently it is a current issue in Japan as an orbital motorway is planned around Tokyo. When examining old files from the 70's, I was able to recall that a junction for the M25 was planned at Bell Common, Epping, and that a full interchange was *not* planned for the M25/M11 junction - there was to be no south exit from the M25 to the M11 when travelling west! This proposal meant that all westbound traffic on the M25 wishing to go to east London would use the Epping junction and travel through the middle of the Forest - down the old A11!

However, at the Inquiry the Inspector was persuaded to recommend that this traffic be directed on to the M11 by the provision of a full M25/M11 interchange and that the plans for an Epping junction be abandoned.

The disaster of a major flow of traffic through the Forest was thus avoided - and this is what the 'objectors' had prevented! I have yet to see a video of the programme!

Besides the future road threats and the current traffic problems with which we have been involved, during the last year we have had discussions with the Conservators about the re-introduction of grazing into the Forest and the necessity of fencing areas of the Forest to achieve this. As you know from the Newsletters we have expressed concern about the extent of the proposals and the general principle of enclosing the Forest with fences.

After some modification the proposals have been approved in principle by the Conservators for the area of forest between Chingford and High Beach. This is planned to come into operation in 2002, but the practical details of the scheme are still being considered.

During the autumn a further planting of acorns occurred that will eventually create the 'Millennium Wood' in the buffer land called the 'Coopersale Fields'. You will remember that this was a Millennium commemoration proposal by the Friends of Epping Forest, that we undertook to organise - assisted by Mr Ian Cox on behalf of the Conservators.

The same two Primary Schools were involved; they were children from the neighbouring Coopersale School and children from Oakhill School, Highams Park. Although we explained they would need to come back with their grandchildren to see the oak trees, the children enjoyed the actual planting operation.

I think it would be true to say that our relationship with the Conservators continues to be truly in the interests of the Forest - as it should be. During the last year we have been consulted

and kept informed even more fully than previously and in ways that enable us to freely express our views. The views or representations that we have made have been given fair consideration and I believe have been valued, by the Superintendent, the Verderers and the Epping Forest Committee.

We have been able to support the Conservators over a number of issues during the year. I have already mentioned the several local planning matters, there is also the objective of achieving increased protection for the Forest in terms of planning status and the aim of obtaining an overall traffic planning strategy for the Forest. Also, hopefully, the eventual operation of the licensing scheme to improve the regulation of horse riding in the Forest.

The Forest Supper was a success again, both financially and socially, thanks largely to the generous donations to the raffle and the equally generous purchasing of tickets; but you will hear more from the Treasurer in a moment.

Those of you who attended the Supper will know that as the retirement, after 23 years, of the Superintendent, Mr Besent was imminent, we presented him with an album of photographs that covered events during the 23 years. When accepting the album he declared his intention of joining our ranks. We however were able to forestall this by presenting him with honorary Life Membership of the Friends. We felt he had been a true friend of the Forest and that this was a very appropriate gesture.

You will have read the deservedly fine tribute to John given in the Newsletter by recently retired Verderer, Mr John Harvey. John Besent, as Superintendent, was always friendly and approachable. We could always speak to him knowing that what we said would be given full and proper consideration and knowing that he was appreciative of the fact that we both sincerely hold uppermost the interests of the Forest. We wish him well in his retirement and we will endeavour to hold him to his promise to occasionally return to the Forest - at least towards the end of September!

We must also welcome the new Superintendent, Jeremy Wisenfeld. We know we can look forward to a friendly relationship and equally close co-operation in the interests of the Forest.

I must however comment on a sad loss during the year... that of our friend and the Forest's friend Bill Humphreys.

Bill was a hard working committee member for many years and his contribution - to committee affairs, to our walks and to practical matters at all our functions, where Bill was always in the forefront of those with their sleeves rolled up - will be sadly missed. The money given in memory of Bill has been used to contribute towards the Woodland Trust's woodland creation scheme. We have been able to contribute towards a woodland plot dedicated to Bill. The wood is Wheatley Wood, Rayleigh, Essex.

Finally, I am sure you will wish me thank the officers and committee members for their work during the year. May I also thank you for your support and ask you to do just one thing for US...please, recruit a Friend!

**Ken Hoy**

*The Report was unanimously approved by the meeting. The Treasurers Report followed (copies of the Balance Sheet are available on request from Peg Bitten) and the Chairman then thanked the Treasurer for his work during the year and also our Financial Examiner, Peter Gotham, for 'checking the books'.*

## FofEF Dates for your Diary

**July 1st Sunday:** Thornwood Fete: FoEF will be there with a stall and exhibition.

**July 20<sup>th</sup> Friday: 10-30am.** Walk around the Copped

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Hall area. Meet, Lodge Rd Car Park. First turning left on B1393 going north-east towards Epping after the Wake Arms roundabout.

**Leader: Ken Hoy GR 432 998**

**August 18<sup>th</sup> Saturday 10-30am.** (please note change of date and venue) Meet near Queens Head PH, Fyfield, for a circular walk through fields and along the R.Roding (approx 4 miles - two & half hours). Travelling north through Epping fork right on B181 through North Weald Bassett; the right onto A414 at the roundabout; From A414 at Chipping Ongar roundabout, turn left onto B 184 to Fyfield. In Fyfield turn right at sign 'Church Willingale'. Where Queen's Head PH is on left (in Fyfield) park along roadside on the right.

**Leader: Bill Dexter, OS map 167 or 183 (Explorer series) GR 068 571**

**August 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday:** Fete at Swaines Green, Epping  
**GR 455 025**

**September 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday.** 12 - 4 pm. Forest Festival at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge, Ranger's Road, Chingford. **GR 398 948**

**September 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday.** The Centenary Walk. An all-day walk from Manor Park to Epping, that can be joined or left anywhere en-route. Please see elsewhere in Newsletter for details. Meet at junction of Capel Road and Forest Drive, near Manor Park Station at 8 -45am. for

a prompt 9-0am. start.

**Leader: Harry Bitten GR 419 860**

**October 19<sup>th</sup> Friday 11-0 am.** A walk over Monkshams Hall and the Green Lanes of Aimes Green. Meet Lee Valley R.P. Car park at 'Cornmill Meadows'. Travelling north from Waltham Abbey on the B194 ('Crooked Mile'), the car park is the first that you come to on the left.

**Leader: Seymour Moss GR 383 015**

**November 17<sup>th</sup> Saturday 10-30 am.** A 2-3 hr. walk past the Millennium Wood site and around Gernon Bushes and Ongar Park Wood. Meet at Stonard's Hill Car Park. Travelling north through Epping, take the right turn, Stonard's Hill, opposite the Memorial on Epping Green. The 'recreation' Car Park is a short distance on the left.

**Leader: Harry Bitten, GR 464 034**

**November 23<sup>rd</sup> Friday 7-30 pm:** Forest Supper, Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green.

**December 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday 10-30 am:** Christmas Walk, from Earls Path Car Park (by the pond between the Robin Hood & Loughton) - followed by mince pies & a drink.

**Leader: Ken Hoy. GR 415 968**

*Walks last about 2 hours, unless otherwise stated. Please come suitably dressed for the weather and Forest conditions. Public transport can sometimes be a problem on these walks. If you have such a problem please ring 020 8529 8594 for help.*

## STOP PRESS

Foot and Mouth restrictions are no longer in effect in Epping Forest and the surrounding countryside (except where there is livestock) so all walks can go ahead.

## Other Dates

### EF Information and Museum Service

(for further information contact: Epping Forest Information Service **020 8508 0028**)

**July 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday 10-30 am.** Guided walk. 'The Forest Renewed'. Meet Earls Path Car Park, Loughton. **Leader: Tricia Moxey. GR 415 968**

**July 21<sup>st</sup> Saturday 12 noon - 4-0 pm.** 'Stepping Back in Time' at Ambresbury Banks. A great afternoon of Celtic fun, surprises and adventure in the Forest. Bring energy, sensible shoes and your imagination for a trip back into the Iron Age. Car parking at Jack's Hill Car Park on B 172 to Theydon Bois. Further details from Epping Forest Museum, 01992 716882

**July 28<sup>th</sup> Saturday 2-0 pm.** 'Summer Wild Flowers'. Meet at Fairmead Car Park, High Beach. **Leaders: Tricia Moxey & Dr Amanda Samuels GR 408 967**

**August 12<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 10-30 am.** 'Along the Western Heights' Meet Bury Road Car Park, Chingford Plain. **Leader: Jeff Seddon, GR 393 953**

**September 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday, 10-30 am.** Meet in Car park opposite Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge, Chingford. 'Along the Ching'.

**Leader: Verderer Richard Morris. GR 397 946**

### EF Conservation Volunteers Programme

Everyone is very welcome to come along, both to the work tasks and to the social events. We meet on Sundays at the Warren at 9.30am and return about 3.30pm (slightly earlier with mid-week tasks). Of course one is not obliged to stay for the whole day!

**For details:** 'phone Pat Holder 020 8505 4876, or e-mail [p\\_holder@talk21.com](mailto:p_holder@talk21.com) or, Alan Bertram 020 8559 2300, or e-mail [alan@lcctramways.free-online.co.uk](mailto:alan@lcctramways.free-online.co.uk)

**July 15<sup>th</sup> Balsam Bash.** Removing invasive Himalayan Balsam - it is not hard work. Parking: to be arranged as the task location depends on where the need is greatest.

**August 5<sup>th</sup> Wellington Hill.** Continuing the task of restoring the grassland, by removing Oak, Willow and Sycamore. Parking: Near The Duke of Wellington public house. **GR 408 984**

**August 19<sup>th</sup> Hatch Plain** (near Woodford Golf Course). Removing the invading scrub and small trees. Parking: in The Pines, off Whitehall Road. **GR 399 934**

**September 2<sup>nd</sup> Brickyard Pond.** Some of you will remember 're-creating' this pond in the Lower Forest; we shall be enlarging it and opening up the nearby footpath. Parking: The Woodyard. **GR 473 031**

**September 9<sup>th</sup> - Forest Festival** At Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, Chingford, from 12 noon until 4pm. (For more Details contact the Information Centre High Beach. Tel. 020 8508 2266). **GR 396 974**

**September 16<sup>th</sup> Lord's Bushes:** Widening paths and clearing glades around old Oaks. Parking: in Knighton Lane, Buckhurst Hill. **GR 407 935**

**Tuesday September 25<sup>th</sup> Mid-week task** To be arranged.

### Suntrap & Hawkwood Lodge Field Centres

We reported in the last Newsletter that an organisation had been formed to further the aims and support the work of these two Centres, both of which use the Forest as an educational resource for the primary and secondary children of the London Borough of Waltham Forest. At the end of March an Annual General Meeting was held at Suntrap, a

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constitution agreed and officers and a committee elected. Two public events are planned by The Friends of Suntrap & Hawkwood that may be of interest to readers.

**July 13<sup>th</sup> Friday, 7-0 to 10-0pm.** A barbecue - a 'Batty Barbecue' - is to be held at Hawkwood Lodge. Local bat expert, Clive Herbert, will give a talk and lead a bat exploration around the grounds of Hawkwood.

**October 13<sup>th</sup> Saturday, 1-0 to 5-0pm.** Open Day at Suntrap. A chance to look around and see what happens at the Centre, and, if you are a parent or grandparent, there are lots of activities for children.

### **British Naturalist Association, Epping Forest Branch**

**July 7<sup>th</sup> Saturday,** Short all-day Walk in Hatfield Forest, Meet: "Plume of Feathers" car park Loughton at 11 am **Leader: Rita Clayton,** details, 020 8508 8357

**August 11<sup>th</sup> Saturday.** Open Day at The Whitehouse Reserve, 2.30 pm onwards. Be shown around and join us for refreshments. **For details: 020 8524 4239**

**September 8<sup>th</sup> Saturday.** Late afternoon/early evening Ramble in Epping Forest. Bring Tea. Meet: Stubbles car park, Nursery Road, Loughton at 3.30 pm **Leader: Yvonne Griffiths** 020 8524 8536

**September 22<sup>nd</sup> Saturday,** All-day Walk in Wormley Woods. PH lunch. Meet: Chingford Stn. 9.30 am **Leaders: Ron & Pat Andrews.** 020 8524 4239

**October 20<sup>th</sup> Saturday.** All-day Walk (or 2 half-day walks)

Wintry Wood / Gernon Bushes By members' cars PH lunch at "The Garnon Bushes" leaving at 2 pm. Meet: "Plume of Feathers" car park Loughton - (between P.H. and Esso garage) at 9.30 am **Leaders: Ron & Pat Andrews,** 020 8524 4239

**October 29<sup>th</sup> Monday** 'Birding in the Gambia' by Gordon Langsbury (wildlife photographer and author) Chingford Parish Church Hall, Chingford Green.

### **Essex Wildlife Trust, Epping Forest Group**

**July 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday** 10.30 am Hawksmere Springs Reserve Morning walk to see the summer flowers led by Warden, Andy May. Meet at lay-by Berwick Lane, off School Road, south of Toot Hill **GR TL 517 009**

**September 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday** 2.00 pm 'Afoot in the forest' Walk looking for links between the Forest and Lea valley. Meet corner of Hornbeam Lane and Bury Road Chingford, 2.00pm **Leader: Judy Adams GR 393 597**

**October 20<sup>th</sup> Saturday** 10.30 am / 2.00 pm. Wintry Wood and Gernon Bushes, Coopersale. Meet at Gernon Mead immediately south of railway bridge, Coopersale, off the North Weald Road. Morning and/or afternoon walk, optional pub lunch. **Leaders: Ron and Pat Andrews GR TL477 031**

**October 25<sup>th</sup> Thursday** 8.00pm, illustrated talk on 'Copped Hall' by **Iris Newbery** At Loughton Methodist Church Hall

**October 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday** A walk around Copped Hall - Details to be arranged.

*Further information phone 020 8524 4239*

**November 29<sup>th</sup> Thursday,** 8.00 pm At Loughton Methodist Church Hall. Illustrated talk, 'Wildlife in Epping Forest during the past 60yrs' by **KenHoy**

### **GIFT AID**

As a Registered Charity the Friends of Epping Forest are entitled to reclaim tax on every pound raised from subscriptions, donations etc. At present we can get from the Government **28 pence** for every £1 received and this can be back-dated to 6<sup>th</sup> April 2000.

This could represent a substantial boost to our funds. To enable us to claim this money we need you to complete and return the following form. So if you have joined, renewed your membership or made a donation since 6<sup>th</sup> April 2000.

**please help us by returning this form now.** (don't put it to one side to do later, please do it now before you forget - it will really help our funds at no cost to you, except a stamp.)

*Thank you, Robert Levene.*



### **Gift Aid Declaration**

I want the Friends of Epping Forest to reclaim tax on all contributions/donations I make from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2000 onwards (*please note*, you must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount we will reclaim on your subscription/donation in the tax year).

Mr/Mrs/Ms ----- First name ----- Last name/s -----

Address -----

-----

----- Post code -----

Signature ----- Date -----

Please return to: Robert Levene, 10, Eagle Court, Hermon Hill, Snaresbrook, London E11 1PD